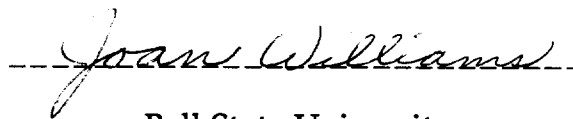


The Middle Ages from A to Z
An Alphabet Book on the Middle Ages

Honors Thesis (ID 499)

by Rebecca L. Gudeman

Dr. Joan Williams

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joan Williams", is written over a horizontal dashed line.

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The Middle Ages

from

a to z

Written and Illustrated by

Rebecca L. Gudeman

The Middle Ages from A to Z

I became quite interested in the Middle Ages during my sophomore year in high school. Although I always had a fascination for the ancient myths and the fantastic stories of the past (long before I could even comprehend), my interests began to converge and the Middle Ages became the pinnacle of these interests.

I chose a mythology class as an English elective in high school. That class took me with it and introduced me to the characters heard about only briefly in the grade school and junior high years. I met characters whose lives were one adventure after another, and characters to whom misfortune was commonplace. I remember Oedipus, Zeus, Ulysses, and so many more. King Arthur, though, (oh the stories of Camelot!) stands out in my mind as the highlight of my travels through literature.

King Arthur and his Round Table--oh that I could have been there! To meet Sir Lancelot, Queen Guinevere, the lords and ladies in all their finery, and Merlin, the magical wizard who lived back in time full of amazement, would indeed be a thrilling experience. All were so fantastic, yet, almost believable.

The study of King Arthur led to other stories and studies of the Middle Ages. The deeper I dug into the period, the more exciting it became. The customs, traditions, and ideas of the time frolicked in my imagination until I could have been one of the court of many fine, medieval heroes.

During student teaching, I was privileged to do a thematic unit on the Middle Ages. The students enjoyed reading Robin Hood and King Arthur and his Knights. Several activities sprung out of these stories and the time

period, and encompassed all of the subject areas they studied. My studying and love for the Middle Ages finally led to this book.

With such a vast sea of topics to write about and/or to cover, an alphabet book was decided on as the best way to give someone a sampling or taste of the time. I wrote in verse because I enjoy verse. It has a rhythm, a heart beat, if you will, that brings the illustrations to life. If you are not quite sure what certain stanzas mean, perhaps I have whetted your appetite. Look it up! You will be surprised how exciting the time is. When you meet the characters, I trust that you too will become enraptured.

Enjoy reading, but do not stop here--let this be the start of an enlightening experience. Find out what you can about these people and their lifestyles. You just might find something in common!

Objective and Procedure

This book is an attempt to introduce the reader to a few aspects of the Middle Ages. It is an alphabet book, but it is aimed at older elementary school readers. The level of the text is too difficult for most early readers to decipher or understand; one must be familiar with verse and the liberties it possesses. Each stanza tells a story, or at least a tidbit of information, regarding the chosen word or idea. As mentioned in the introduction, I hope this will spark interest and will lead the reader to engage in further study of the time period.

As an art student, as well as an education student, I chose to be not only the author, but also the illustrator. The paintings are done in watercolor and India ink. Each illustration was sketched out, then traced and transferred onto the watercolor paper. I then painted the pictures, generally working on three or four at a time, as the paper must dry between layers of paint. This

process is quite time consuming, but well worth the effort. "Masking" out the letters before painting keeps the painting clean and even. You cannot rush watercolors--but the patience pays off.

The verses took a bit of time as well. It took a while until I could "feel" the desired rhythm. Once the rhythm was established, however, the verses flowed much more quickly. Some seemed to just pour from the mind, while others took a lot of thought and rearranging. I tried to be consistent both in rhyme scheme and in meter. The beat helps the reader anticipate the text and feel the excitement. Verse gives life to a piece of writing.

I am convinced that both the verse and the illustrations cause this book to come to life. I enjoyed working on it and am sure that the reader will enjoy reading it. This book is not limited to older readers, for I think the illustrations are fascinating enough for any age, but older readers will benefit from it the most through the combination of text and illustrations.

Special thanks go to Jim and Room 24 (you know who you are!), Julie, Stacy, Lisa, Bill & Gail, Dr. Williams, and, of course, to my wonderful family for their support and encouragement through this project. I could not have done it without any of you!

Amusement

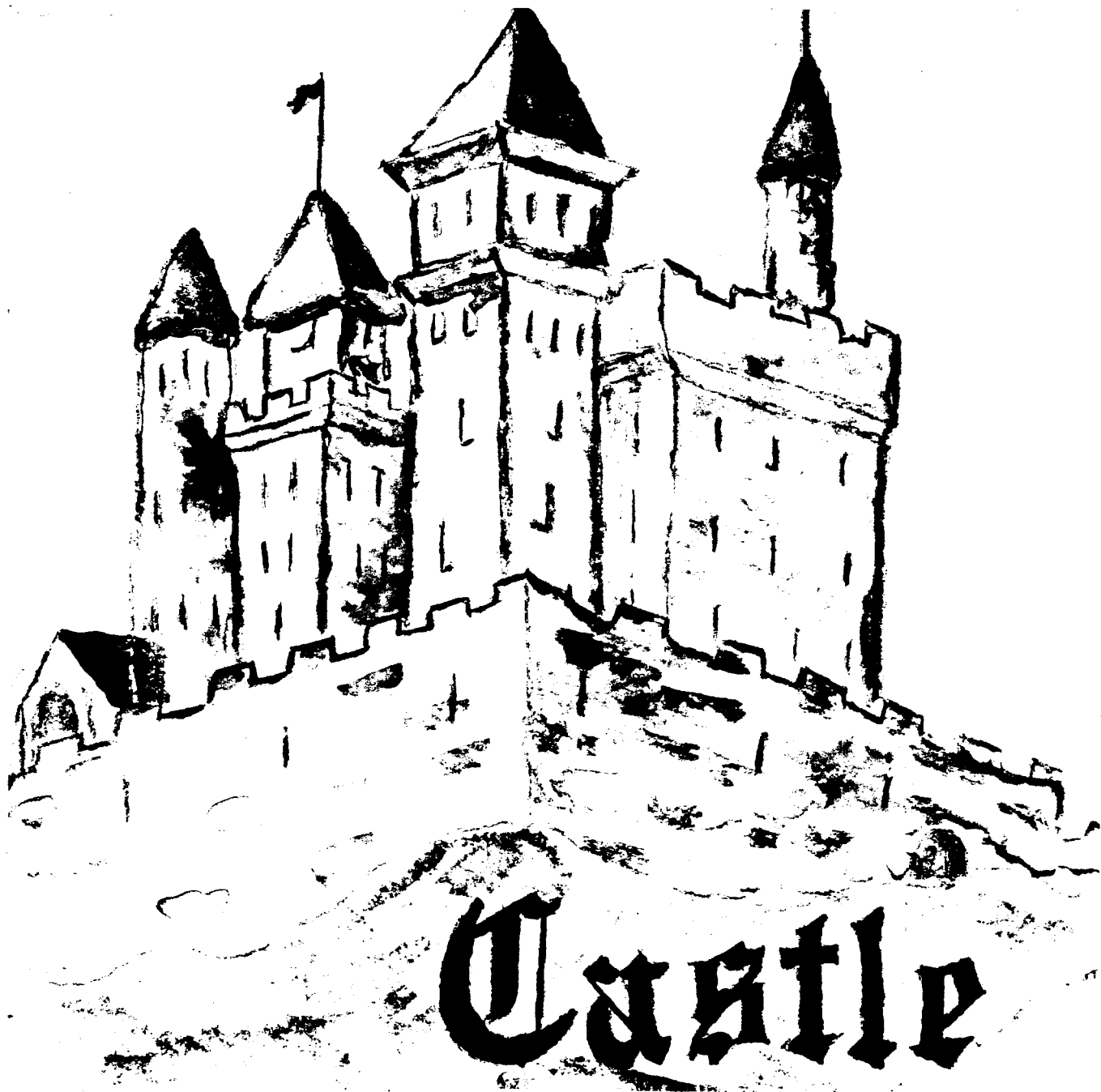


Amusements come, amusements go,
Hawking, lauding, jousting.
So many more! With hopes to show-
One does not do them pouting!

Banquet



The banquet's scents dance in the air.
The food's arranged so neat!
We'll see the lords and maidens fair,
With them, the feast we'll eat.



The castle's walls, stone cold and damp,
Were refuge for the lord.
And during war, the shielded camp
Would enter as its ward.



All those who naughty chose to be,
Were sent down to the dungeon.
With hopes their plight would never be
The dreaded iron maiden!



In school you'd sing and study well
Religious means and ways.
Ignorance only leads to hell-
There no one wants to stay.

Feudalism



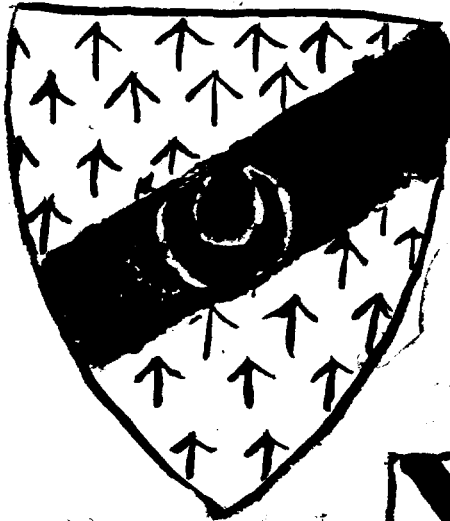
Feudalism ranked from high to low,
From scepter to the plow.
The one took care of folks, you know,
The other of the cow.

Gargoyle



The priest inside, the gargoyle out
Would make bad spirits flee.
But should they come, no need to shout-
Just fall upon your knee.

Heraldry



I saw a knight in battle flee,
He was not friend, but foe.
My family crest, my heraldry,
Was what had made him go.



Illumination

Illuminations, oh how bright
Your colors on my page.
I hope you won't dim in the light,
Or mellow dull with age.

Jester.



The jester danced and threw his darts;
The king clapped with delight.
A fool, you'd think, would have no smarts,
Not be uniquely bright.

Kitchen



Baking bread and roasting meat-
Do all this in the kitchen.
And when it's done, we'll sit to eat,
Be served by page and maiden.

Ladies

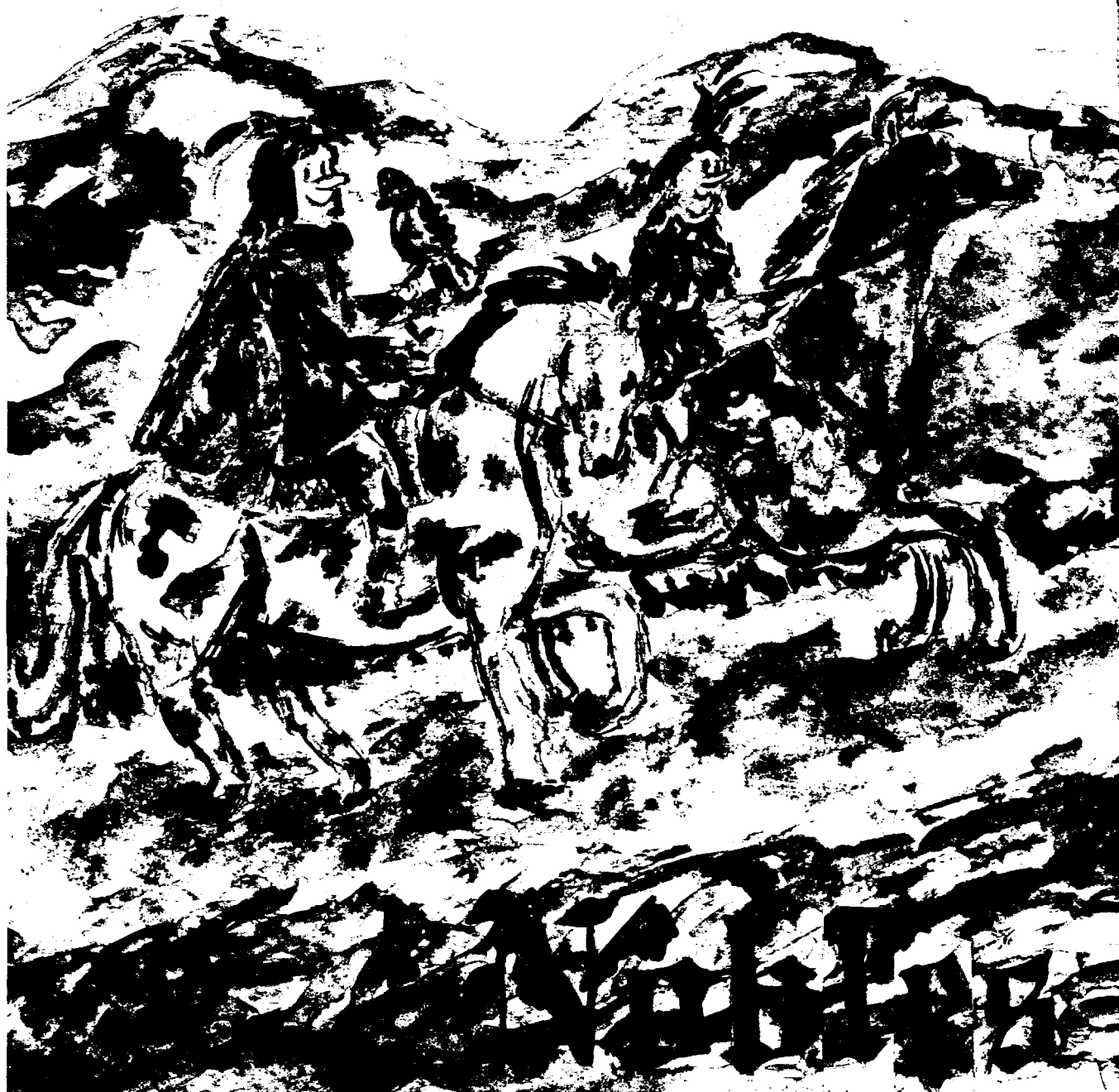


Ladies we are; we plan the day.
Our work's not soon complete.
But when it's done, then we can play-
Our nobels soon to greet.

Monk



Stone monasteries ring with chants
As down the halls would sway
A line of monks in robes, not pants,
To praise the start of day.



The noble's job is so diverse
(as we all plainly know).
He gives to peasants from his purse,
His thankfulness to show.



Octave

While singing praises to our Lord,
The song gets much too high.
An octave shift, a pretty chord,
Our songs float to the sky.

Peasants



a peasant's work is never done,
The field's ready to glean.
The work goes on till setting sun-
That's how they stay so lean.



The knight was sent upon a quest
In honor of his lord.
Lots of adventures, not much rest,
But great was his reward.

Rescue



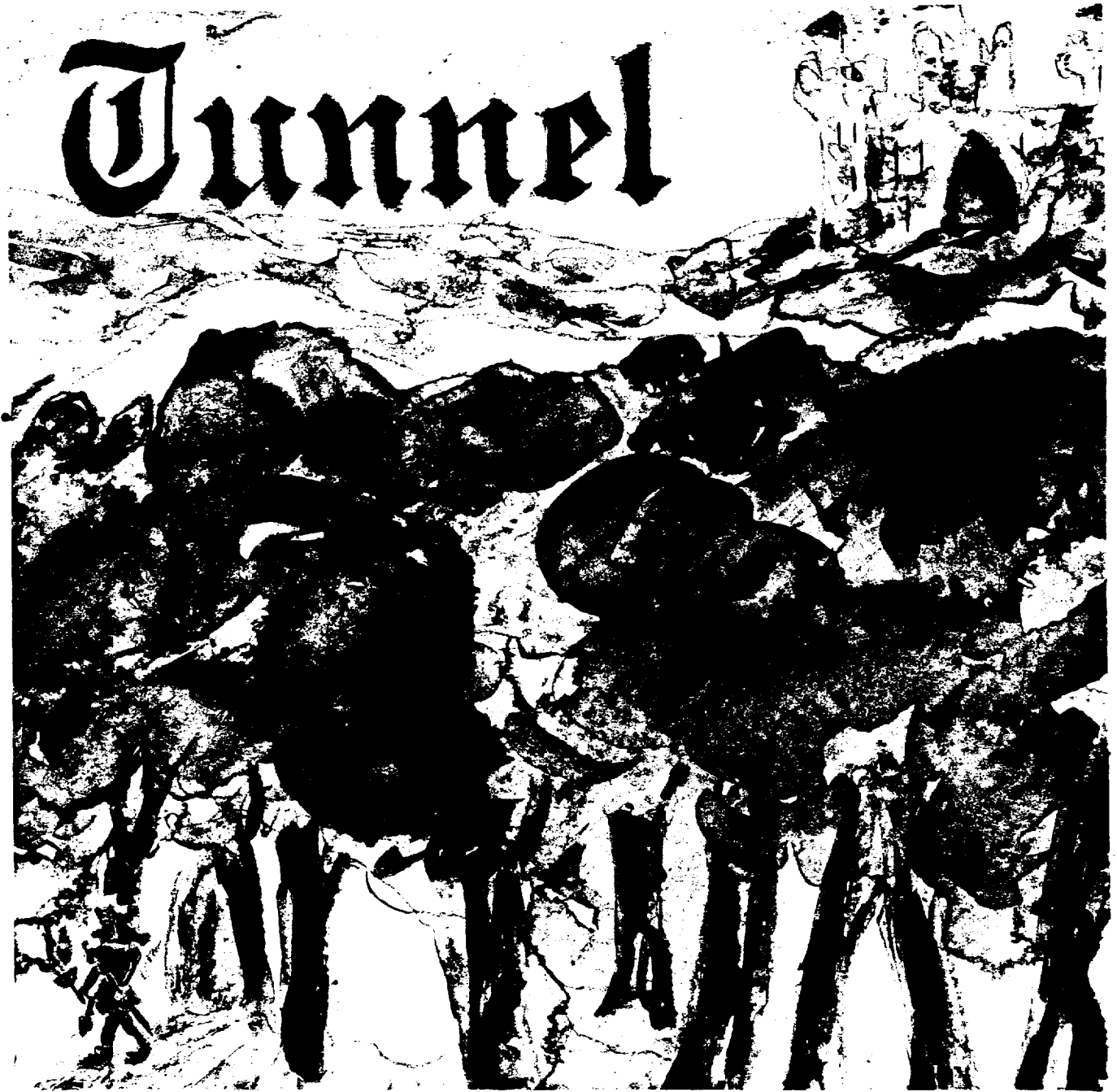
As, dragon bound, she cried for help,
A knight to rescue flew.
With sword drawn high, he gave a yelp,
And ran the dragon through!

Squire



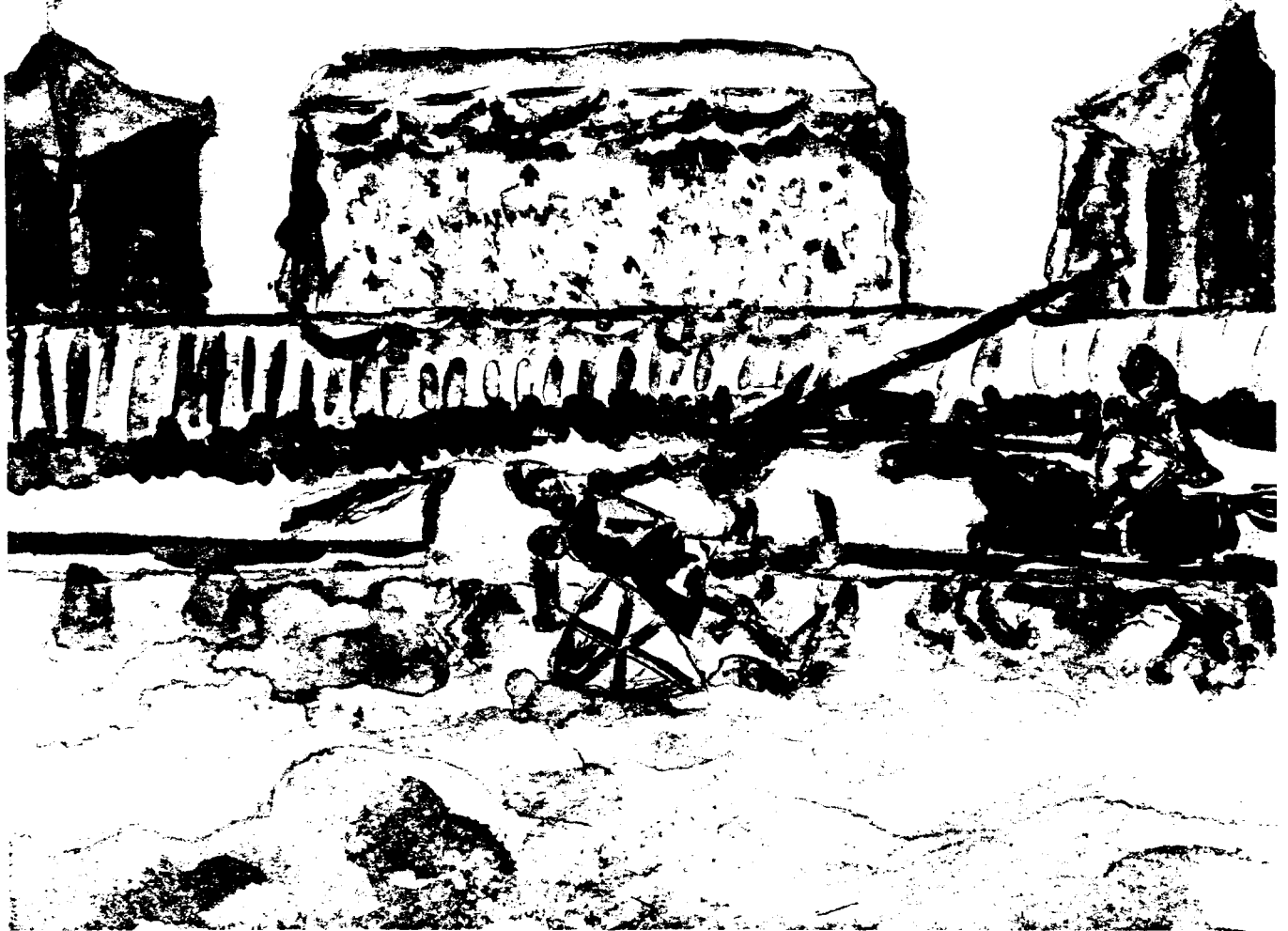
"Oh squire, bring my sword and shield,"
The knight called to the lad.
"I must go riding to the field-
In armor I'll be clad."

Tunnel



Most castles had a passage way,
Should escape be a must.
A tunnel hid, though night or day,
The secret sealed with trust.

Unhorsed



Half the crowd groaned, the other cheered,
As one knight was unhorsed.
The seated one looked down and jeered,
"I won again, of course!"

Veils



A gentle maiden, pure and fair,
No argument would make,
But would each day a fresh veil wear,
Some noble's heart to break.

Weapons



The blacksmith pounded day and night
axe, halberd, shield, and sword,
To make weaponry strong, yet light,
For his knight and his lord.

Excalibur



Excalibur! Excalibur!
Oh famous sword so strong.
Belonged alone to King Arthur-
'Twas he who did no wrong.

Yeoman



"Oh yeoman, take this message far-
You are my trusted one.
Don't put the note inside a jar,
It must soon reach my son."

Zoom!



Alas! Unto the end you've come.
Quick - zoom back to the start.
And this time when you read, have fun-
Look also at the art.